



Arlington Residential Design Guidelines Study

Design Review Working Group Meeting - February 27, 2020

Agenda

1. Introduction, Project Goals, Process, Timeline
2. Review of Existing Conditions
3. Discussion of Neighborhoods and their Characteristics
4. Review of Existing Zoning
5. Next Steps

Project Goals

The Town of Arlington would like to work with the community to create Residential Guidelines that:

- Address three sets of interests: the preferences of neighborhood residents; the desires of property owners to add onto or replace existing housing; and the public benefit that is the concern of the ARB itself.
- Reflect and strengthen the unique character of each neighborhood.
- Codify the balances between different needs in a clear and understandable way - community and individual, aesthetics and market needs, control and flexibility.
- Are enforceable through an approval process that ensures the balance is embodied in the built environment as new structures are built.

Process

TASK 1

Existing Conditions Analysis

- Neighborhood boundaries and inventory
- Identification of Areas of Change

TASK 2

Neighborhood Workshops

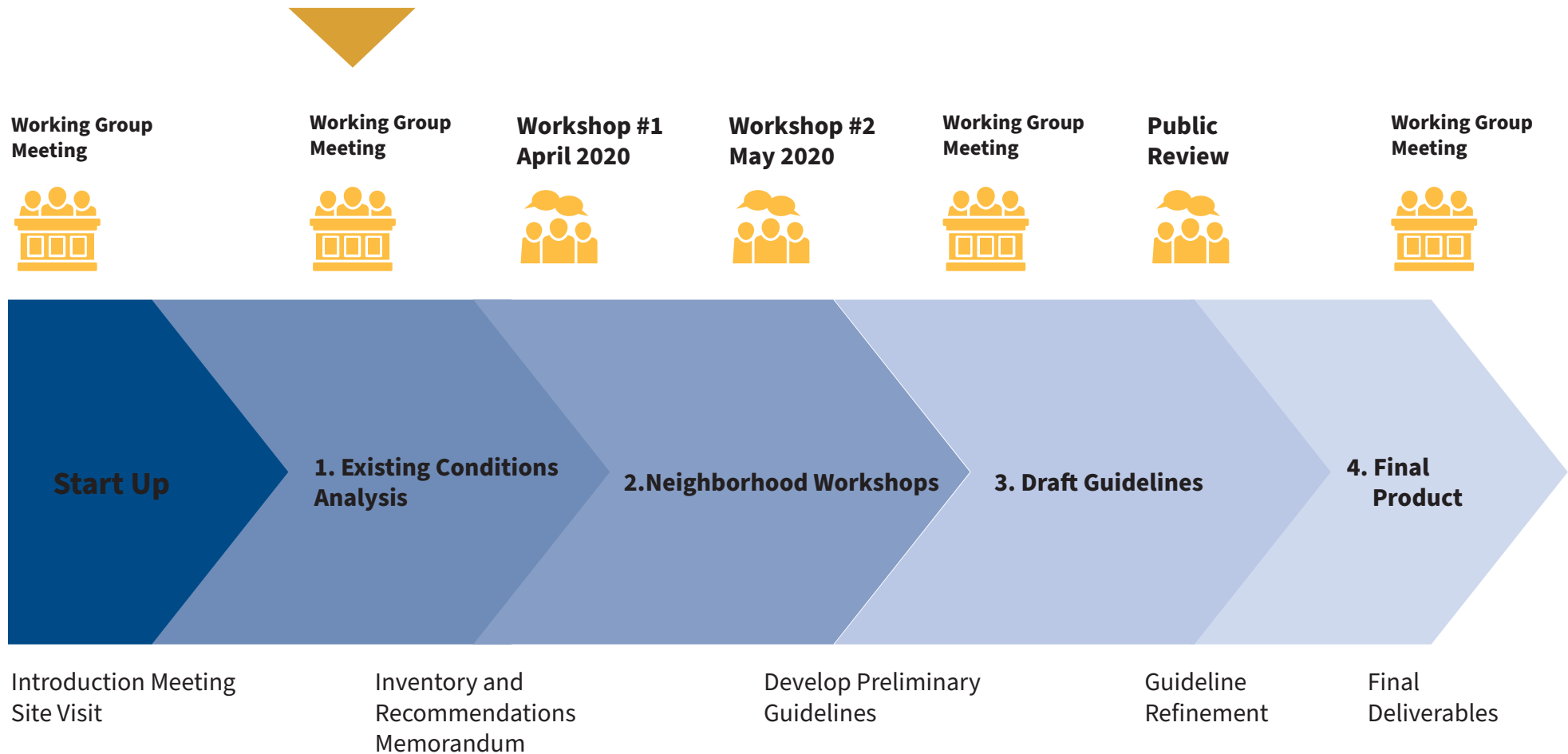
- First workshop: define design elements that are most critical to sense of place
- Second workshop: explore different scenarios for design guidelines and review processes

TASK 3 & 4

Preparation of Draft and Final Guidelines

- Draft Design Guidelines
- Working Group and Public Review of Draft Guidelines
- Final Design Guidelines

Process



Existing Conditions Analysis - Overview

Through the analysis, the team hopes to answer the following with the group's input:

- What are the key design issues and patterns that impact the identity of a neighborhood?
- What are the different neighborhoods? What factors differentiate them from each other?
- What is the current permitting process and where would design review be added to the existing process? How can we balance clear and understandable guidelines with flexibility?
- How can design guidelines that balance the needs of homeowners to maintain and expand their homes in an economical way with the desire for updated and new houses to be consistent with their neighbors?

Existing Conditions - Key Design Issues

1. Additions that do not fit the design context of the existing house and neighborhood
2. New Construction that is not in scale with the neighborhood
3. Parking that dominates the principal facade

1. Additions that do not fit the design context of the existing house and neighborhood



Mismatched rooflines



Oversized, asymmetric wall dormer



Oversized shed dormer with bay window

Photos taken by Wynelle E., Wendy R., Harriman Team



Better contemporary addition - uses materials to distinguish addition

2. New Construction that is not in scale with the neighborhood



Long frontage with too many elements



Appears very tall, with under-sized porch and too many elements



Feels larger due to lack of landscaping and mismatched elements that do not align



Appropriate scale and design relative to neighboring mix of Capes and larger Colonials

Photos taken by Wynelle E., Wendy R., Harriman Team

3. Parking that dominates the principal facade



Park-under and dormers create significant height



Elevated front porch and first level



Garage pulled forward acting as focal point rather than front entrance



Better use of landscaping and topography help to balance garage with house

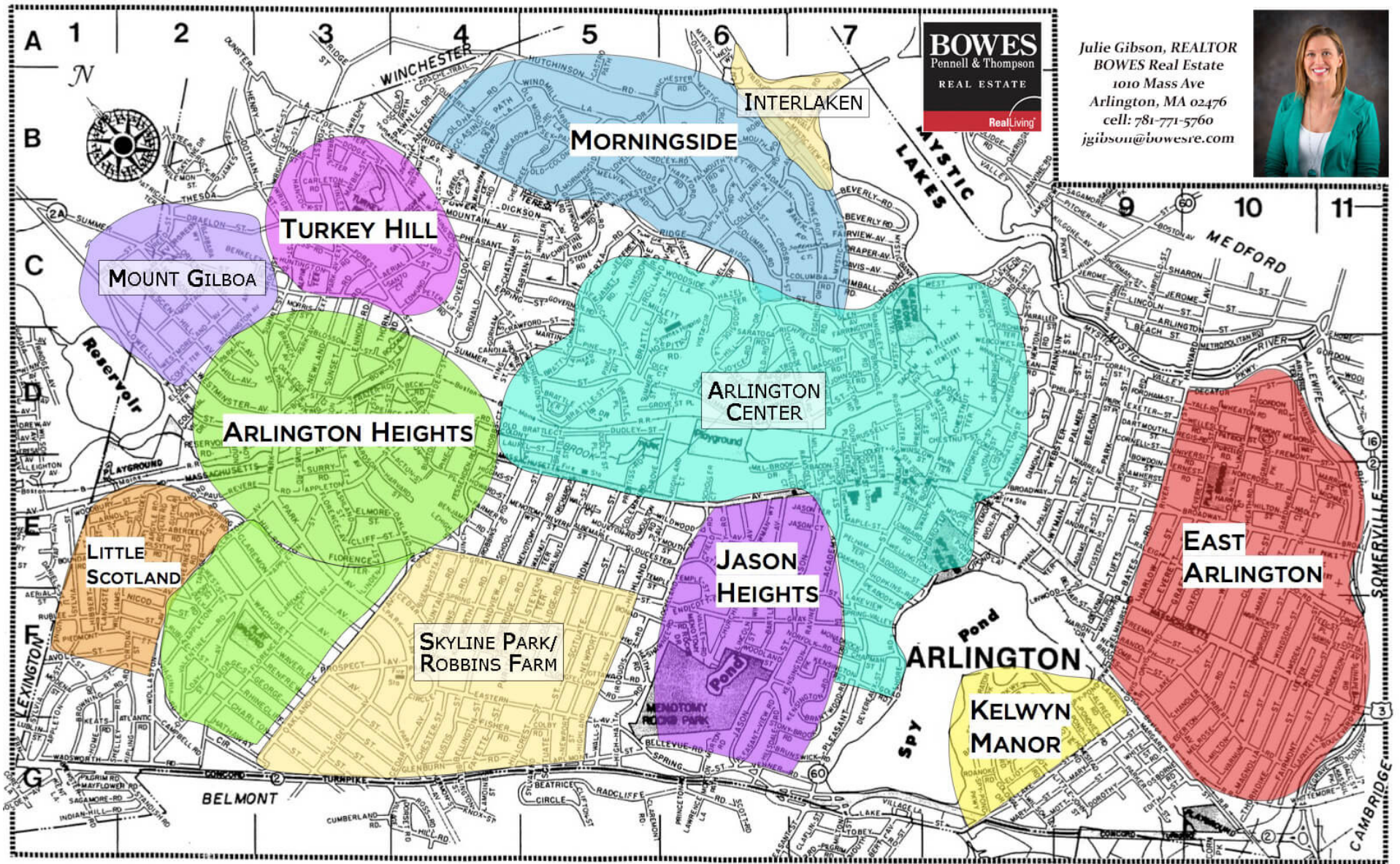
What makes up a neighborhood's identity?

A 'sense of place' depends on a neighborhood's residents but also the physical characteristics that make up a neighborhood.

Elements that help to distinguish different neighborhoods include:

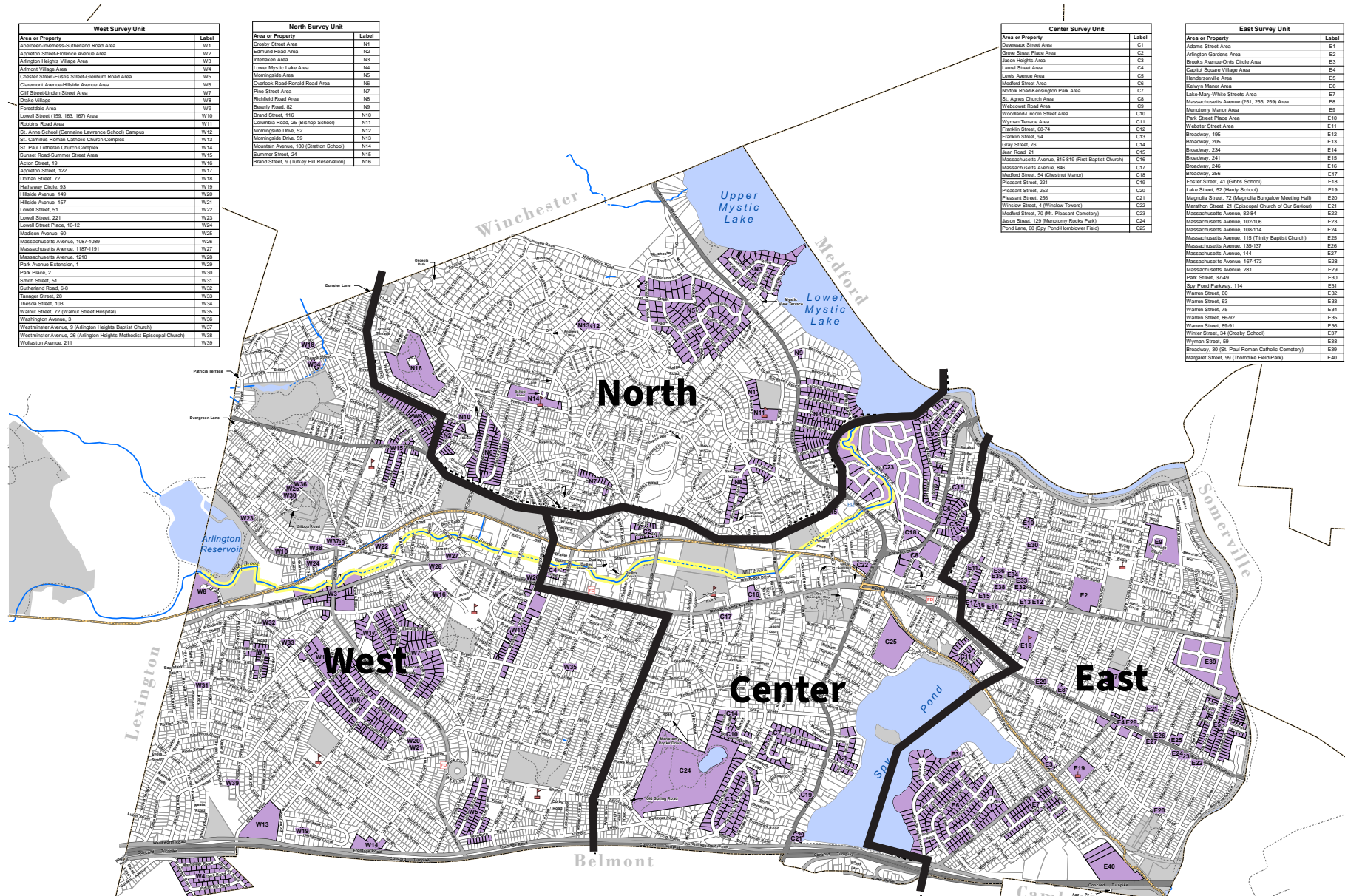
- History of development - Streetcar suburb vs. post-war suburb.
Arlington's population nearly doubled in the 1920s and saw other waves of development after WWII in the 1950s.
- Landmarks and open spaces
- Street layout and lot size
- Age, style, historic districts
- Massing, density, height

Neighborhoods (Unofficial, from Realtor)



Source: <http://juliegibsonhomes.com/arlington/>

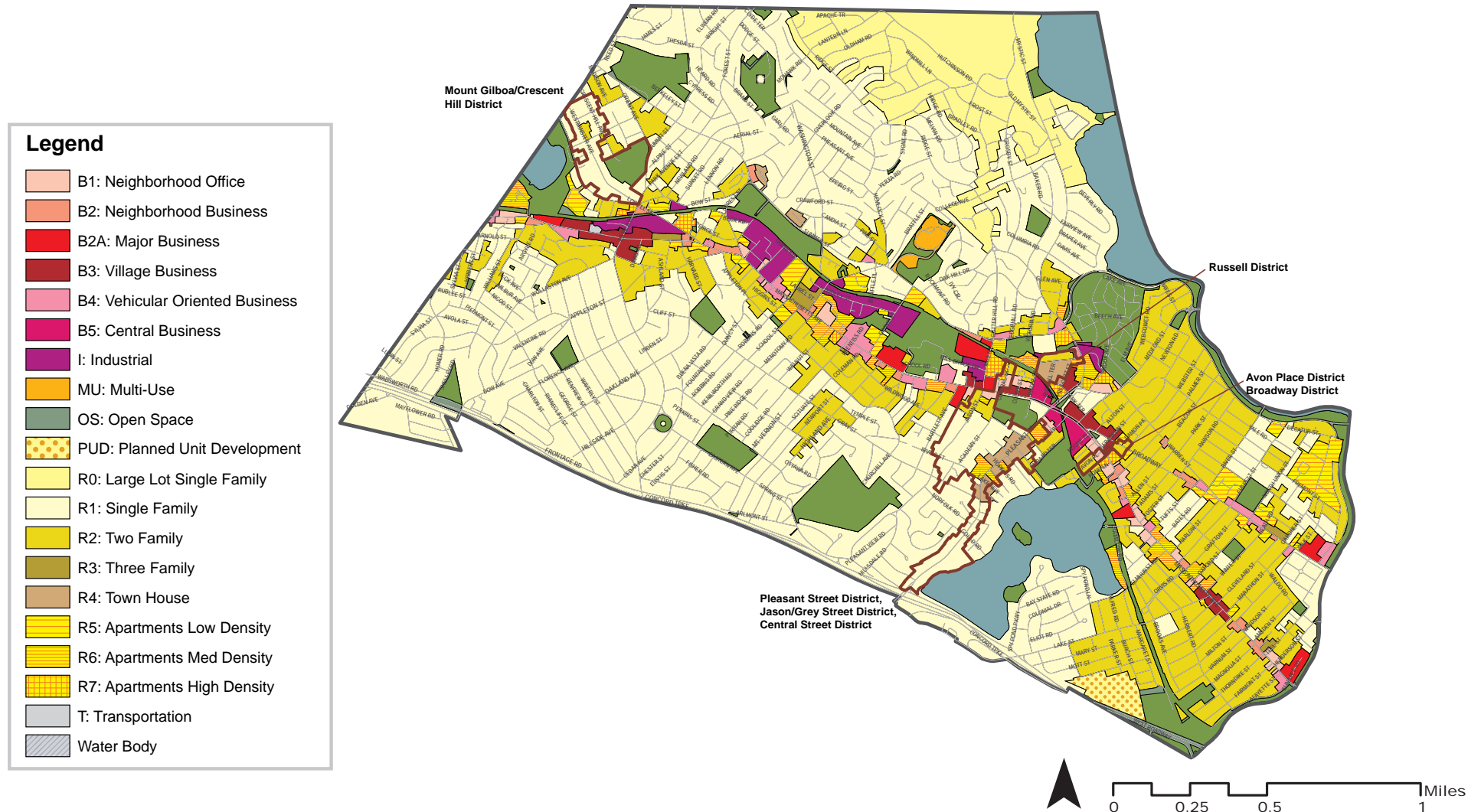
Neighborhoods (Master Plan Historic Survey Districts)



Source: Arlington Planning and Community Development Department, Arlington Master Plan

Zoning Districts

Most of the Arlington is zoned R1. Morningside has many R0 areas and East Arlington / Areas along Mass Ave are R2 and higher, which help to create distinct neighborhood identities.



Neighborhood “Fuzzy Boundaries” - 9 areas

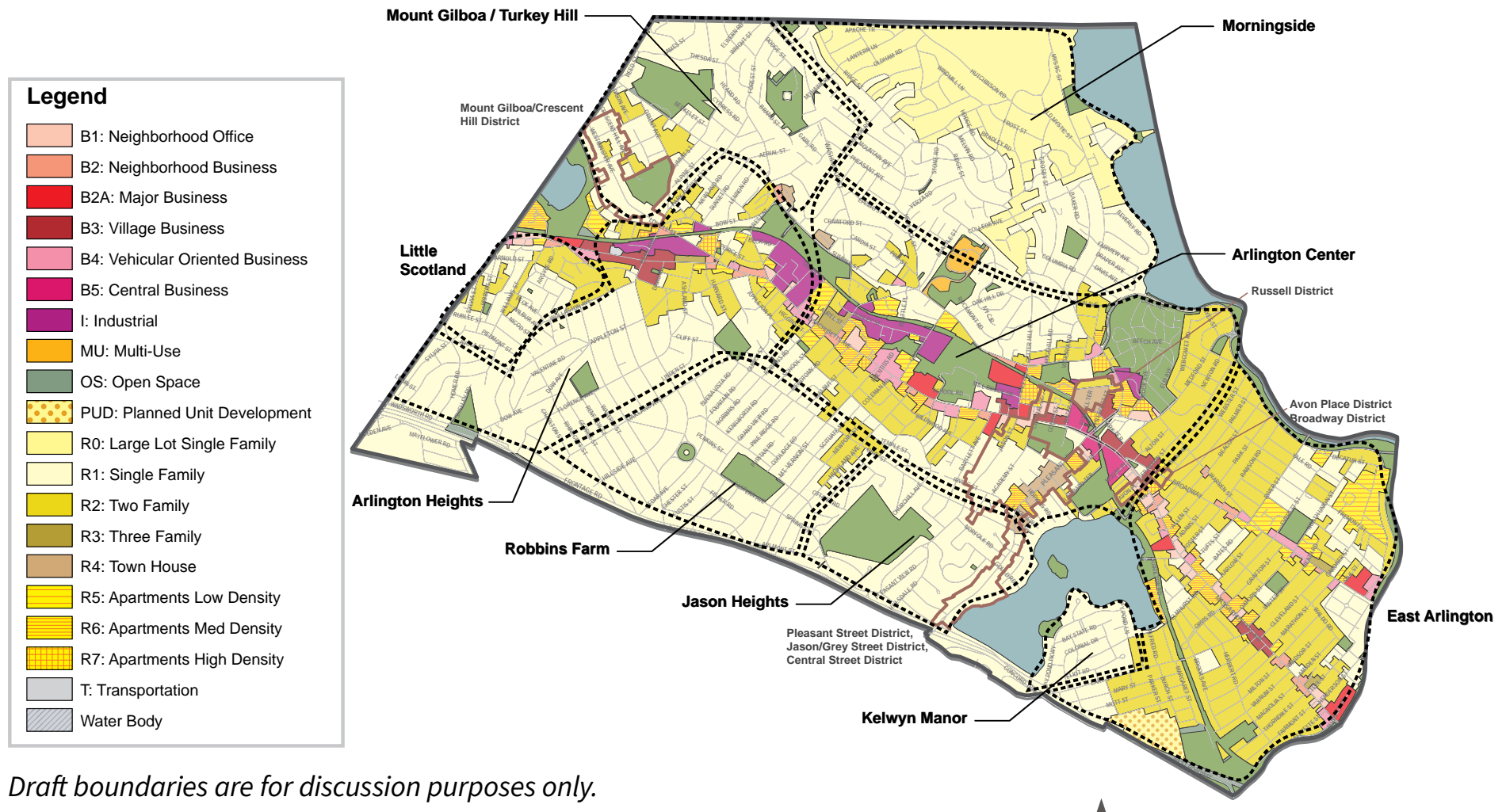
This ‘fuzzy boundary’ map was drafted by synthesizing information from unofficial mental maps, zoning, key open spaces, and maps of Accessor’s Data such as lot size, age, FAR, and style.



Draft boundaries are for discussion purposes only.

Zoning Districts

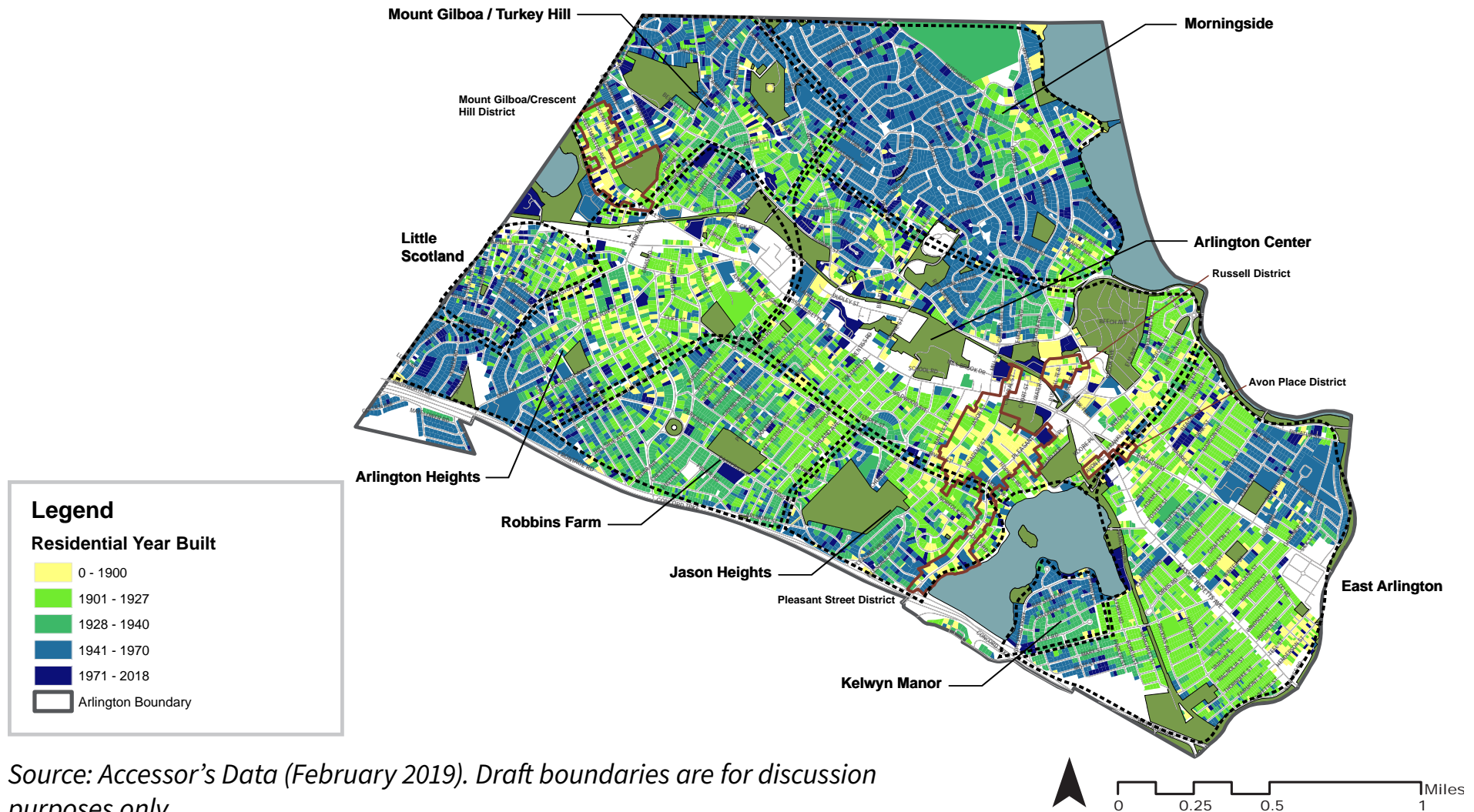
Overlaying the draft “fuzzy boundary” map on the zoning map reveals how zoning districts shape boundaries between the denser areas with the other neighborhoods. But the uniform 1F zoning does not help to differentiate between many of the areas.



Draft boundaries are for discussion purposes only.

Residential - Year Built

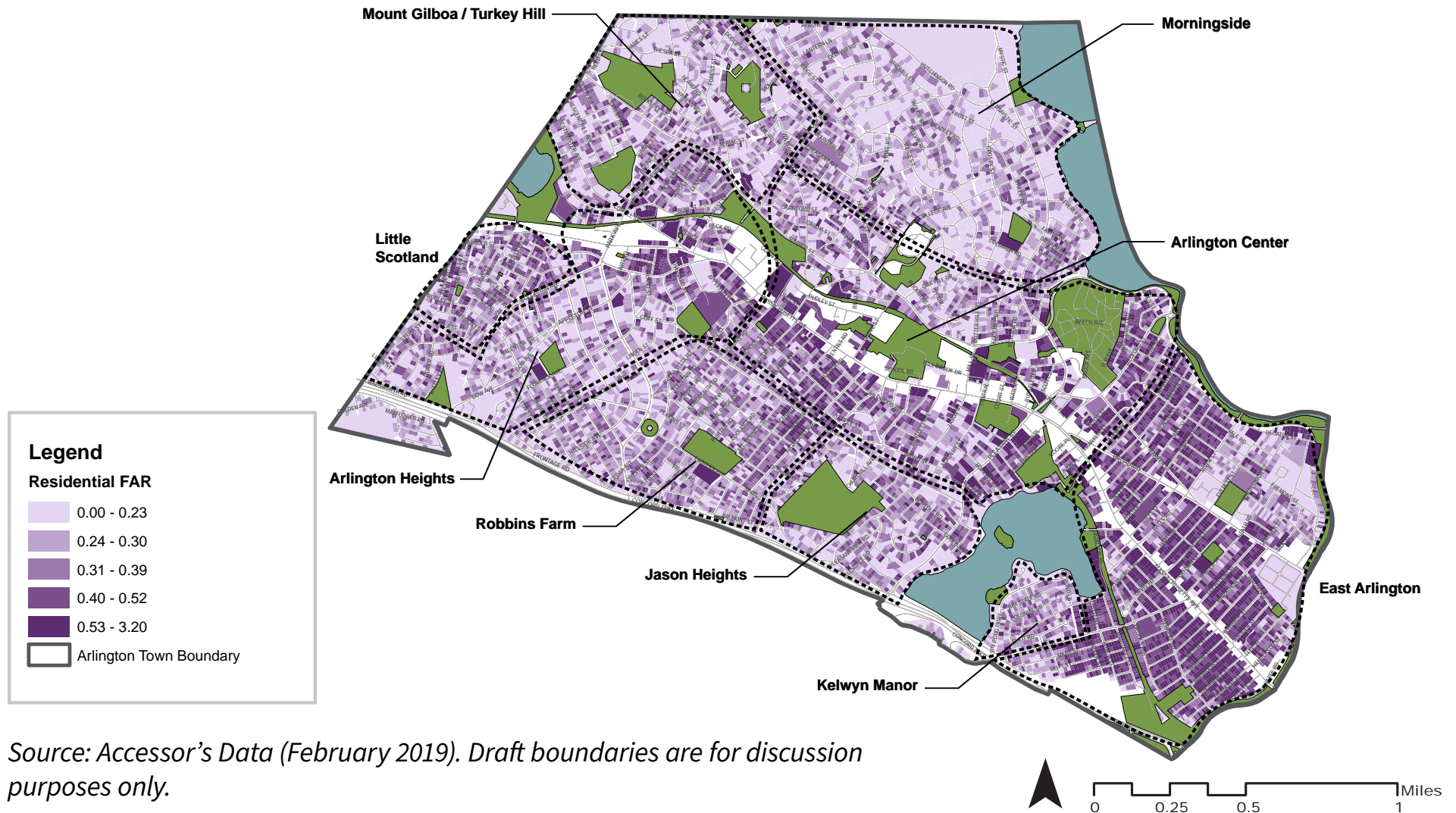
Arlington has seen different waves of construction which affects the dominant style of different areas. For example, Morningside has many Ranch-style homes built in the fifties through seventies.



Source: Accessor's Data (February 2019). Draft boundaries are for discussion purposes only.

Residential - FAR

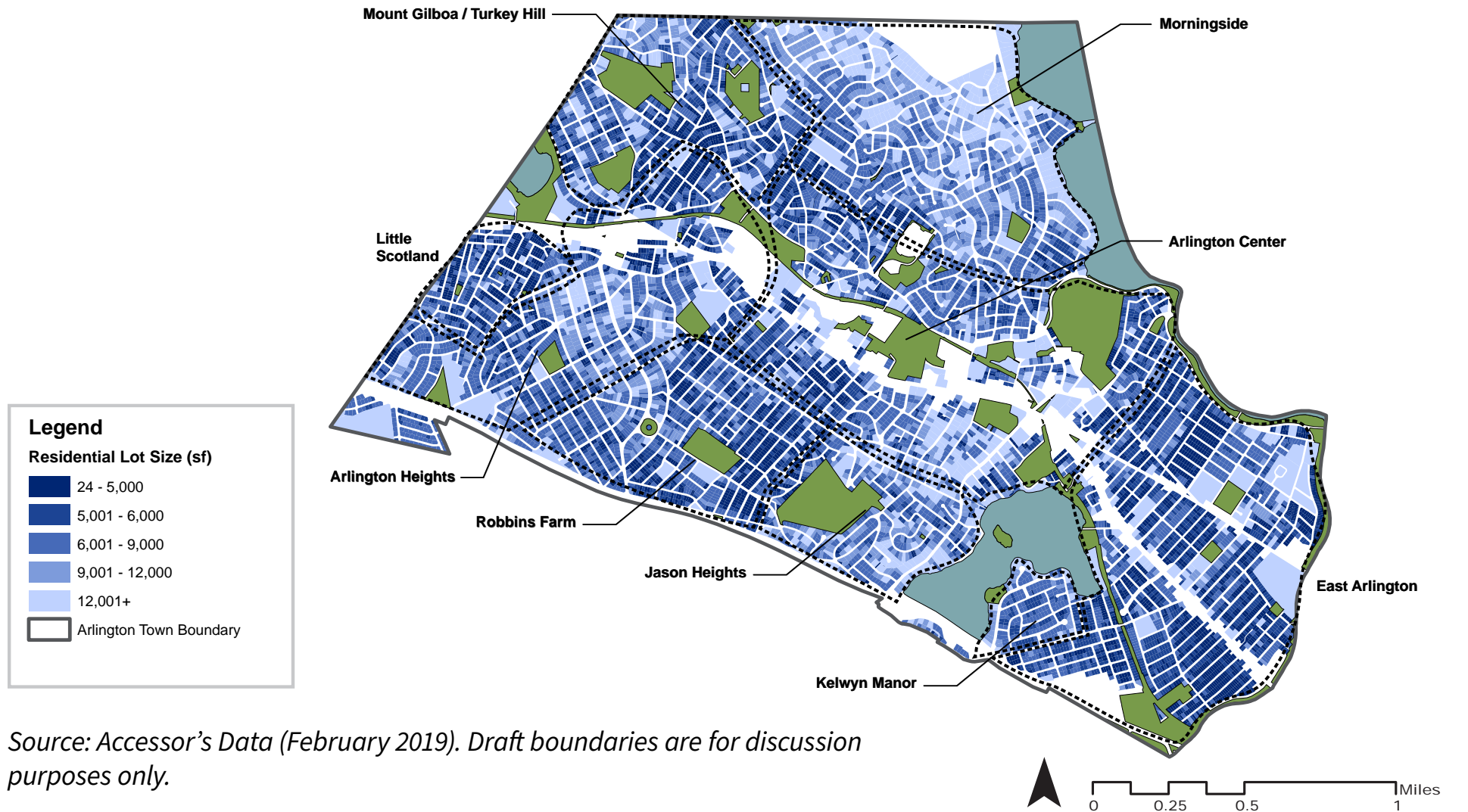
Floor Area Ratio is calculated by dividing the Gross Floor Area by the Lot Size. East Arlington and areas along Mass. Ave. in Arlington Center and Arlington Heights are the densest areas, reflecting their R2 and higher-density zoning.



Source: Assessor's Data (February 2019). Draft boundaries are for discussion purposes only.

Residential - Lot Size

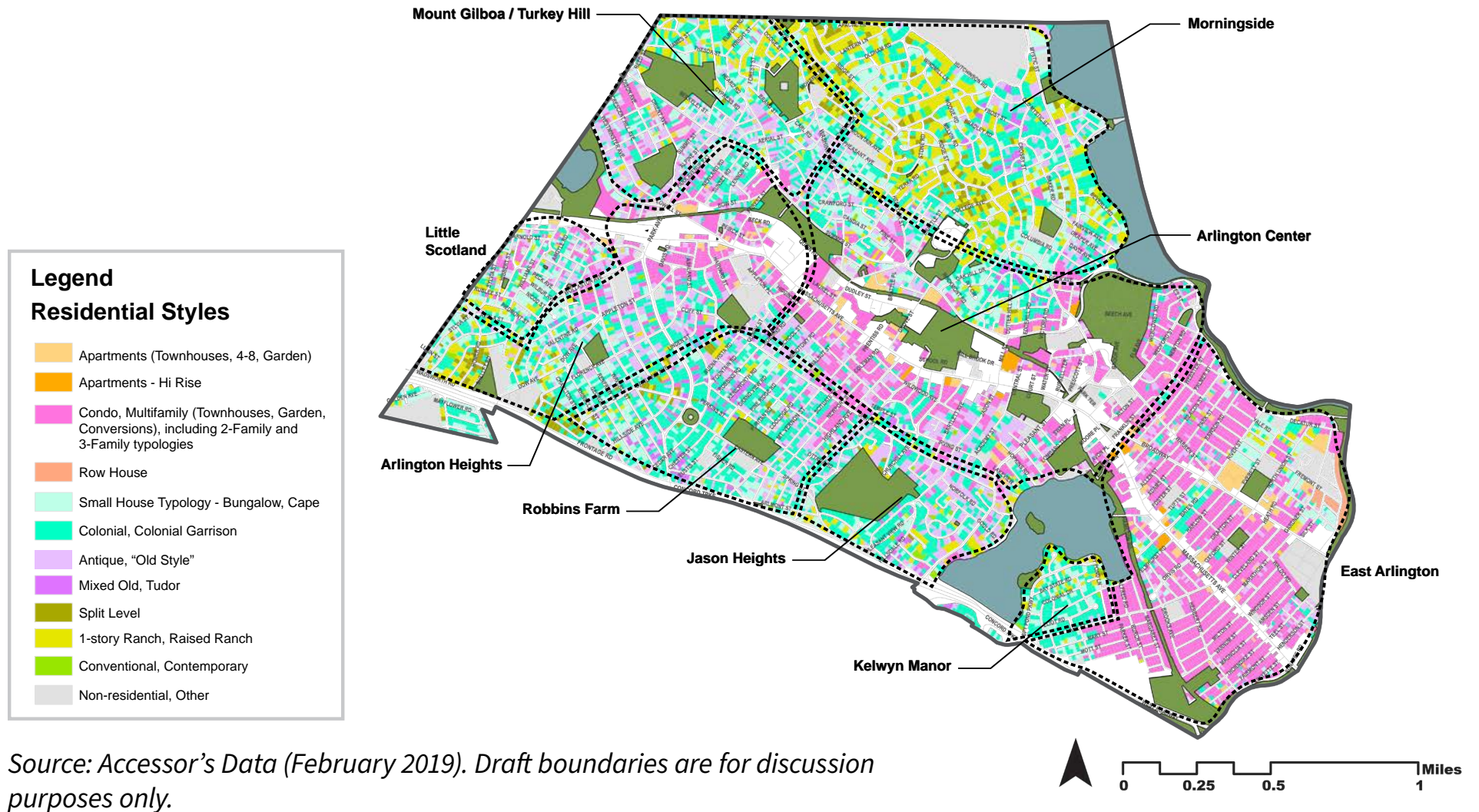
Residential Lot Sizes vary across Arlington and speak to the type of street layout of each neighborhood. Generally, neighborhoods developed as street car suburbs in the early 20th century are more compact.



Source: Accessor's Data (February 2019). Draft boundaries are for discussion purposes only.

Residential - Style

Understanding the elements of different residential styles is an important first step to developing tailored guidelines, from additions to Bungalows to updating a historic Queen-Anne-styled home. Note that Accessor's data might be inconsistent at times.



Residential - Style (Examples)

Categories adapted from Accessor Data Classification



Tudor

- Elaborate Forms, Steep Roofs
- Decorative Half-Timbering
- Early 20th-century

Colonial (Dutch)

- Gambrel Roof “Barn” with shed dormer

Antique/Mixed Old/Old Style

- Catch-all term in Accessors Data for homes of mixed styles or undetermined style
- Mix of craftsman, colonial, tudor, victorian revivals, etc.

Photos taken by Wynelle E., Wendy R., Harriman Team. Some images from Google Streetview.

Residential - Style (Examples)

Categories adapted from Accessor Data Classification



Bungalow

- Enclosed/Open porch, Front Shed Dormer, Smaller, 1 1/2 story



Cape

- Smaller, 1 or 1 1/2 Story
- Colonial Revival or Derivative



Colonial

- Medium-size, 2-story
- Colonial Revival or Derivative



Garrison

- Similar to colonial, with second floor “bumped out”



Colonial (Contemporary)

- Updated materials
- Strong contrast



Colonial (Contemporary)

- Complex roof elements
- Attached garage (park-under)

Residential - Style (Examples)

Categories adapted from Accessor Data Classification



Ranch

- Popular during post-war, 1950s
- Low pitched roof and single-story
- Attached garages become more common
- Dominantly styled as Colonial Revival



Raised Ranch

- More popular later, 1960s
- Similar style to Ranch but has second story
- Dominantly styled as Colonial Revival



Split Level

- Similar in style to Raised Ranch
- Includes separate floors, including garden-level basement
- Typically takes advantage of topography

Photos taken by Wynelle E., Wendy R., Harriman Team. Some images from Google Streetview.

Residential - Style (Examples)

Categories adapted from Accessor Data Classification



Townhouse

- Describes newer-built 2-families (median 2,168 sf, 2005)
- Park-under
- Generally, traditional style



Two-Family

- Categorized as “Condo Conversion”, “Multi-Garden”



Three-Family

- Categorized as “Condo Conversion”, “Multi-Garden”



Rowhouse

- Describes older attached, smaller duplexes on separate lots in East Arlington

Photos taken by Wynelle E., Wendy R., Harriman Team. Some images from Google Streetview.

Residential - Style (Examples)

Categories adapted from Accessor Data Classification



Multifamily 'Garden' (1970s)

- Largely built in 1960-70s
- Simple, little ornamentation, surrounded by parking lots

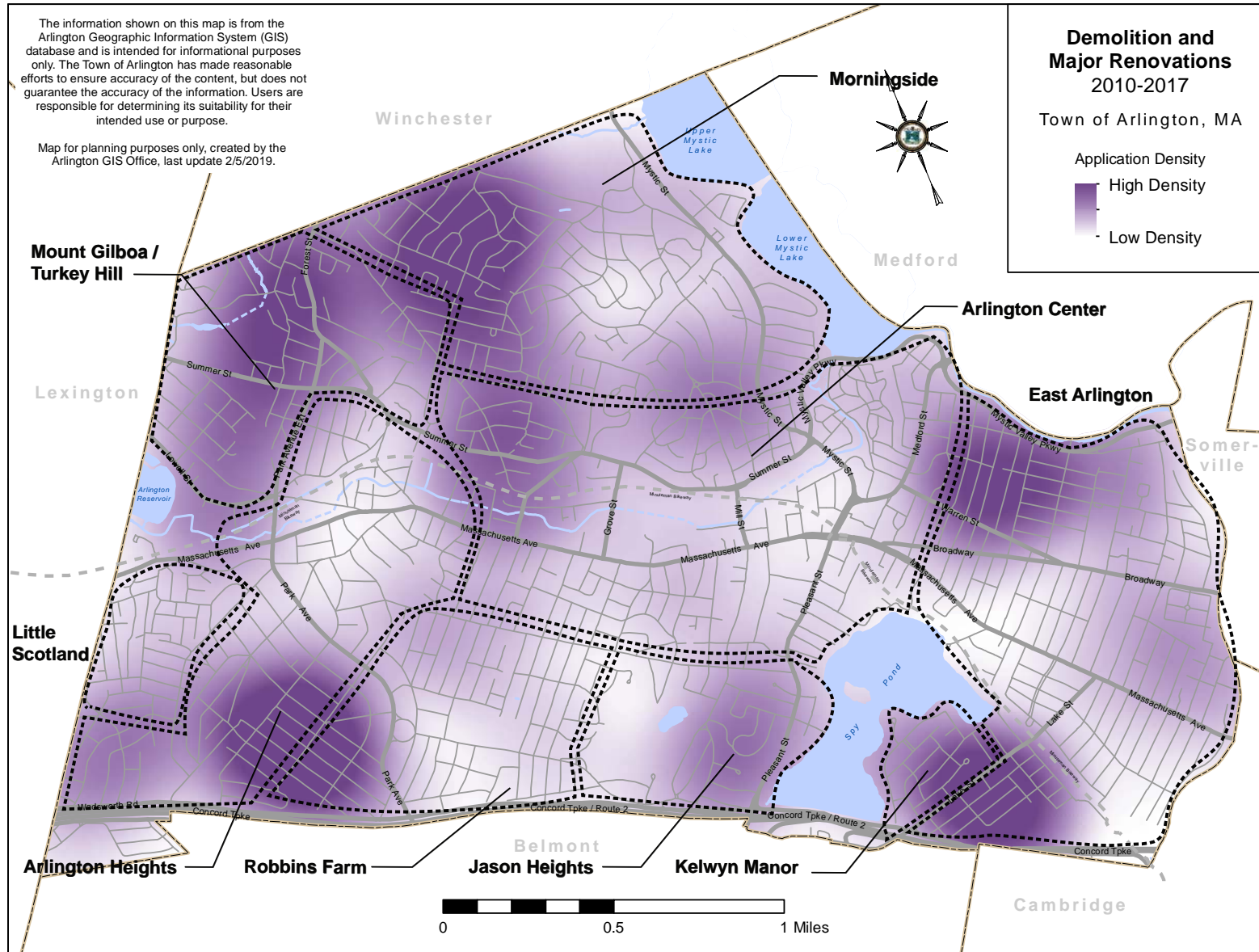
Multifamily 'Garden' (2010s)

Multifamily (4-8)

- Similar style to 2-Family or 3-Family but with a shared wall

Photos taken by Wynelle E., Wendy R., Harriman Team. Some images from Google Streetview.

Permitting - Heat Map



Source: Arlington Planning and Community Development Department

East Arlington

Characteristics

Residential Zoning: R1, R2, R3, R5, R6

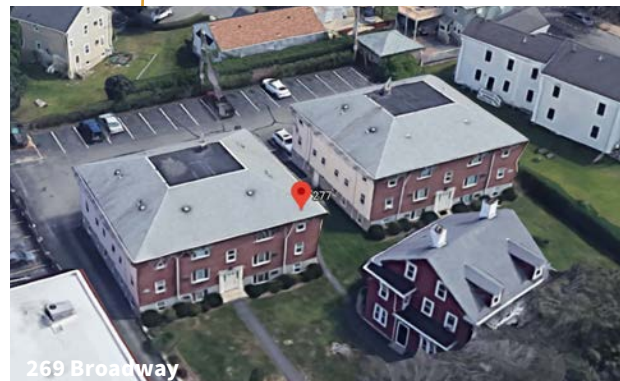
Styles: Two-Family, Three-Family, Multi-Family, Condo Conversions

Lot Size: Smaller, Compact

Age: Older with pockets of recent constructions (Beacon Street)

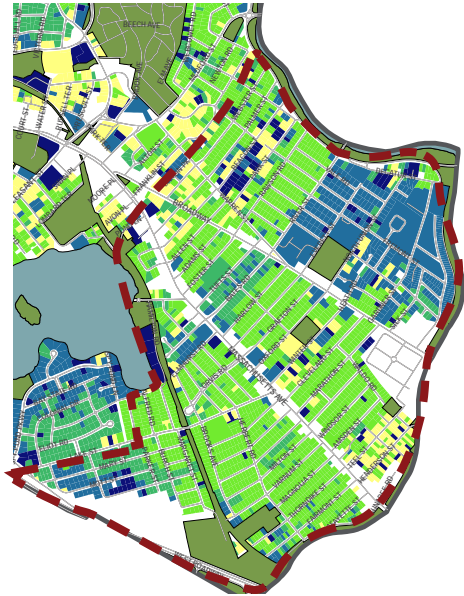
Observations from Analysis:

East Arlington is Arlington's densest neighborhood and is centered around Broadway and Massachusetts Avenue. It is a mix of primarily 2-Family houses and multi-family residential buildings. The housing stock is primarily pre-war with a corner of more recent developments of Arlington Housing Authority apartments to the northeast.



Photos taken by Wynelle E., Wendy R., Harriman Team. Some images from Google Streetview.

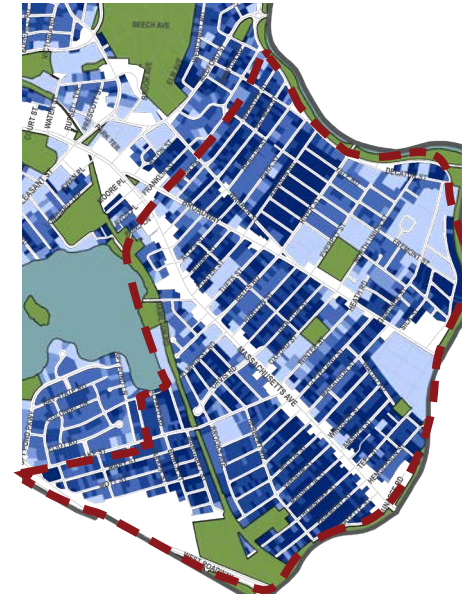
East Arlington



Legend

Residential Year Built

- 0 - 1900
- 1901 - 1927
- 1928 - 1940
- 1941 - 1970
- 1971 - 2018
- Arlington Boundary



Legend

Residential Lot Size (sf)

- 24 - 5,000
- 5,001 - 6,000
- 6,001 - 9,000
- 9,001 - 12,000
- 12,001+
- Arlington Town Boundary



Legend

Residential FAR

- 0.00 - 0.23
- 0.24 - 0.30
- 0.31 - 0.39
- 0.40 - 0.52
- 0.53 - 3.20
- Arlington Town Boundary



Legend

Residential Styles

- Apartments (Townhouses, 4-8, Garden)
- Apartments - Hi Rise
- Condo, Multifamily (Townhouses, Garden, Conversions), including 2-Family and 3-Family typologies
- Row House
- Small House Typology - Bungalow, Cape
- Colonial, Colonial Garrison
- Antique, "Old Style"
- Mixed Old, Tudor
- Split Level
- 1-story Ranch, Raised Ranch
- Conventional, Contemporary
- Non-residential, Other

Arlington Center

Characteristics

Residential Zoning: R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7

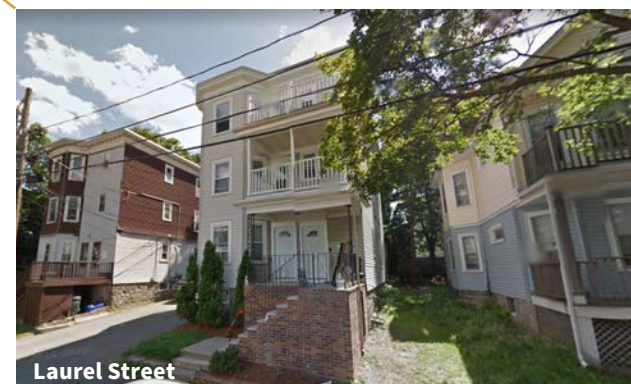
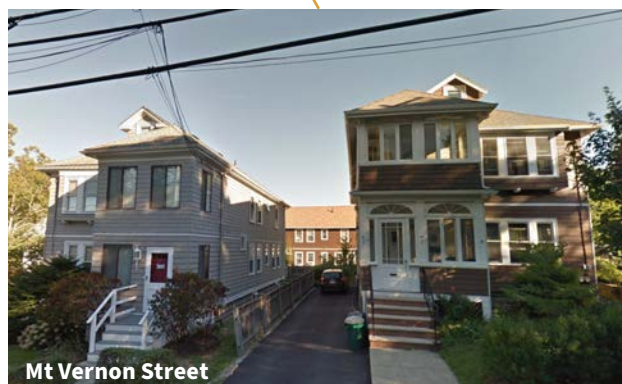
Styles: Mix, Two-Family, Three-Family, Multi-Family, Condo Conversions

Lot Size: Mixed

Age: Older to the south of Mass Ave and post-war to the north

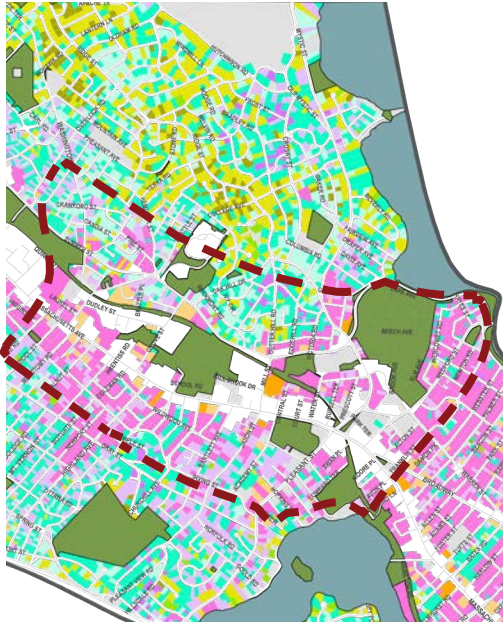
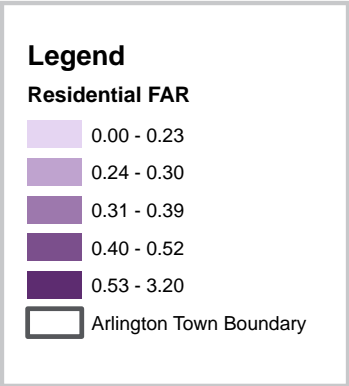
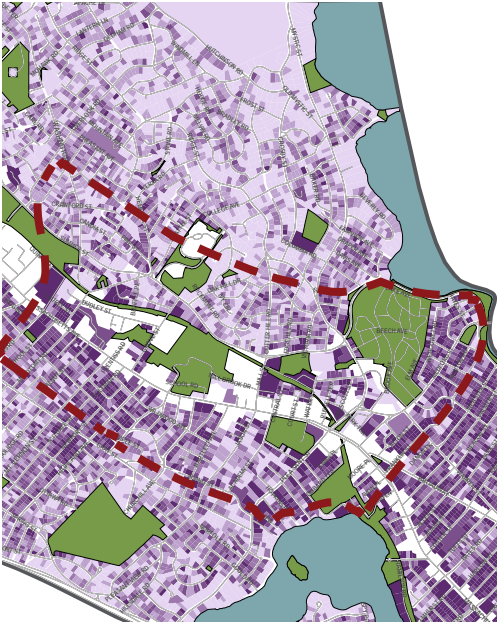
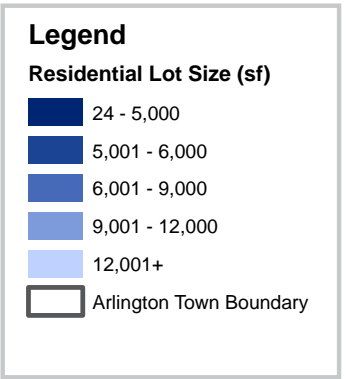
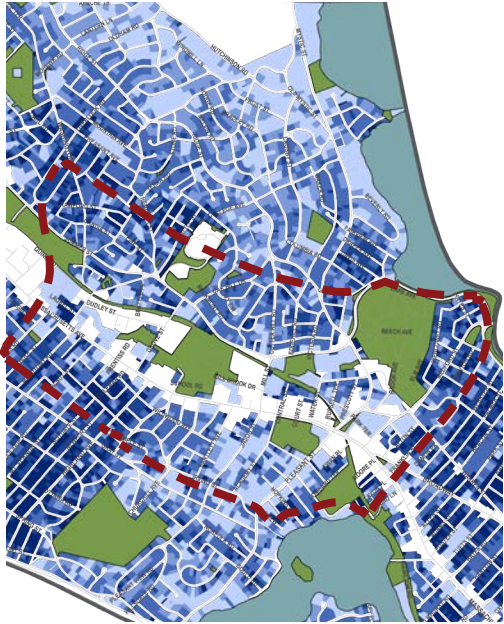
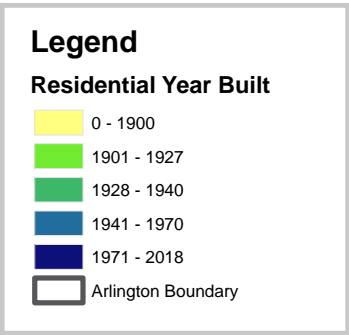
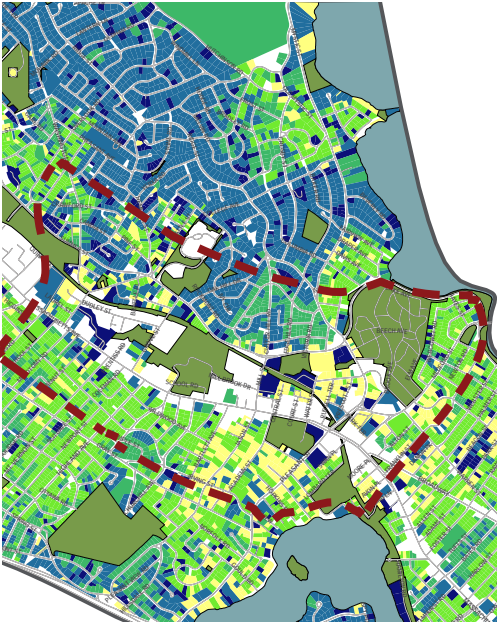
Observations from Analysis:

Arlington Center is less defined style-wise. At the meeting point of its surrounding neighborhoods, it is a mix of single-family houses to the north and a mix of two-family and single-family houses to the south. There are pockets of density closer to Massachusetts Avenue, intermixed with commercial uses.



Photos taken by Wynelle E., Wendy R., Harriman Team. Some images from Google Streetview.

Arlington Center



Arlington Heights/Little Scotland

Characteristics

Residential Zoning: R1, R2, R3, R5, R7

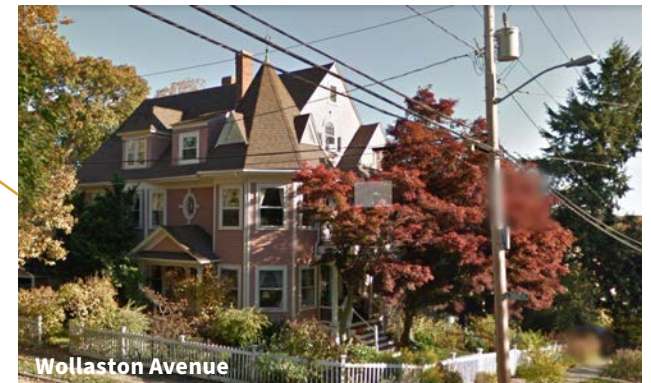
Styles: Cape, Colonial further from Massachusetts Avenue and 2-Family closer to Massachusetts Avenue. Bungalow, Colonial, Cape, and Ranch to the west.

Lot Size: Mixed

Age: Mostly pre-war but with post-war construction to the southwest

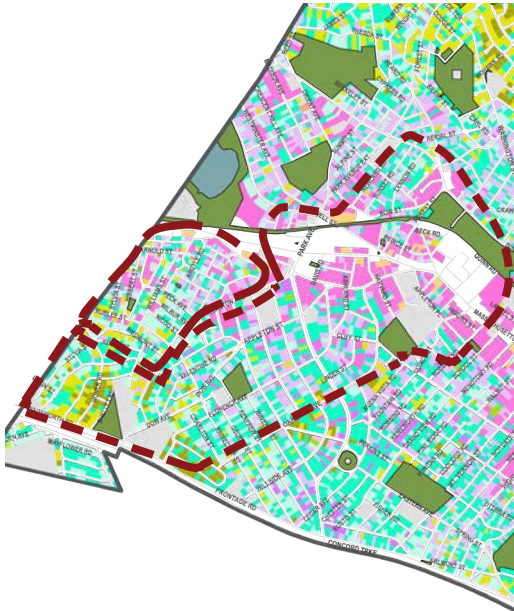
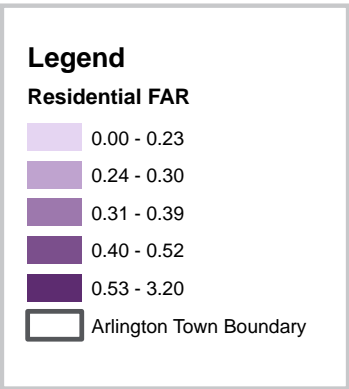
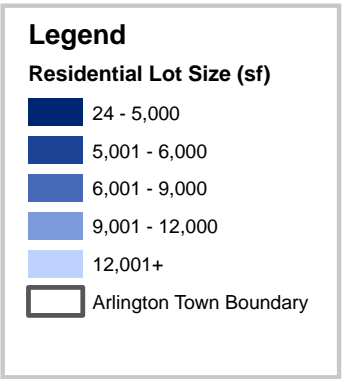
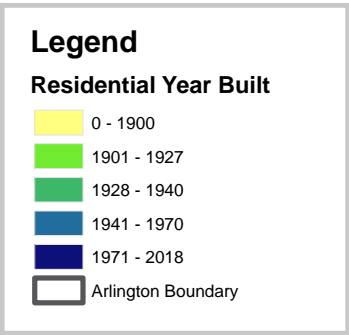
Observations from Analysis:

Arlington Heights marks the west end of the Massachusetts Avenue spine that bisects Arlington. Little Scotland is the unofficial name of the Arlington Heights Park subdivision where all the streets are named after places in Scotland, originally built in 1895-96. The style and age of houses is mixed within blocks.



Photos taken by Wynelle E., Wendy R., Harriman Team. Some images from Google Streetview.

Arlington Heights/Little Scotland



Kelwyn Manor

Characteristics

Residential Zoning: R1

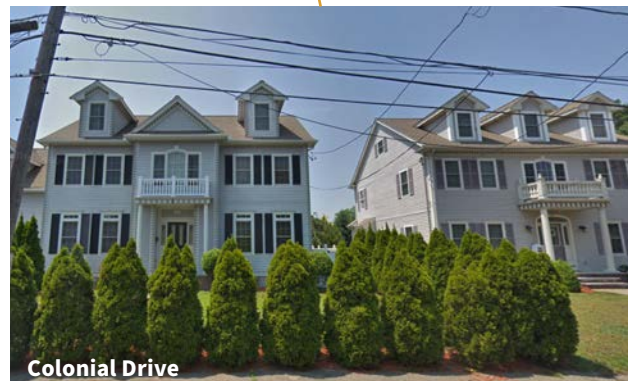
Styles: Colonial, Ranch

Lot Size: Medium

Age: 1930s Inner area with post-war 1950s construction closer to Spy Pond

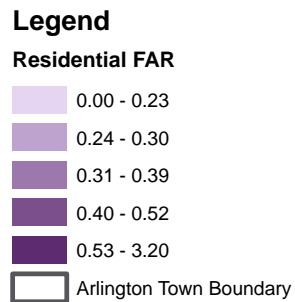
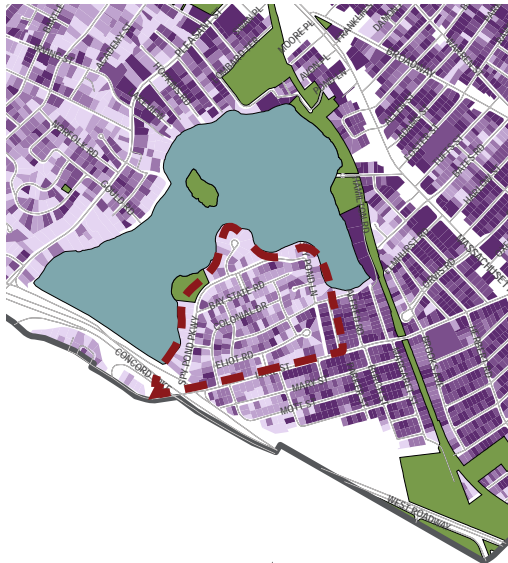
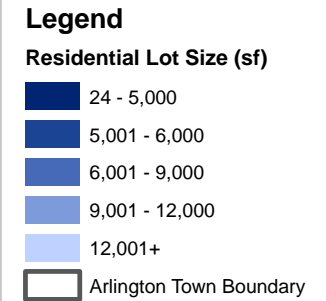
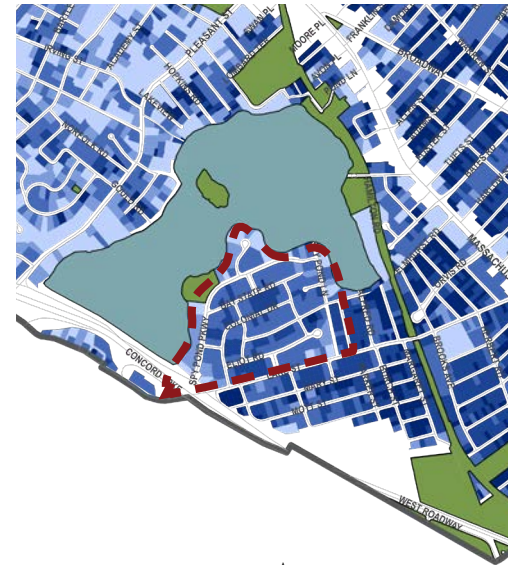
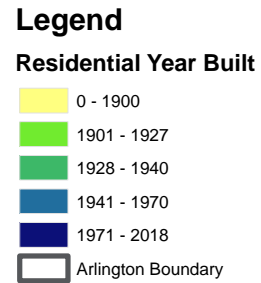
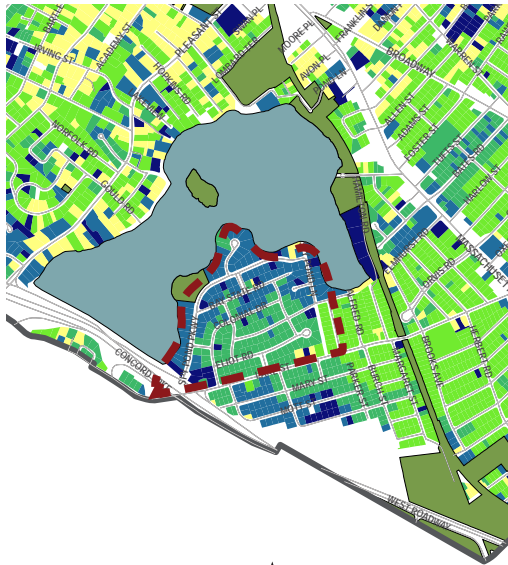
Observations from Analysis:

Initially developed in 1938 by the Kelly Coal Company, the central core of the subdivision is distinctive in its uniform use of period Colonial Revival Style in homes. Lots are generally larger and the layout is suburban with a curved grid and cul-de-sac's. Most homes have an attached garage. Some newer homes in the neighborhood are larger, particularly on the edges.



Photos taken by Wynelle E., Wendy R., Harriman Team. Some images from Google Streetview.

Kelwyn Manor



Jason Heights/Arlington Center

Characteristics

Residential Zoning: R1, R2

Styles: Colonial, Other Historic Styles

Lot Size: Medium-Large

Age: Pre-1900, Pre-1930 Pleasant Street District and newer outside

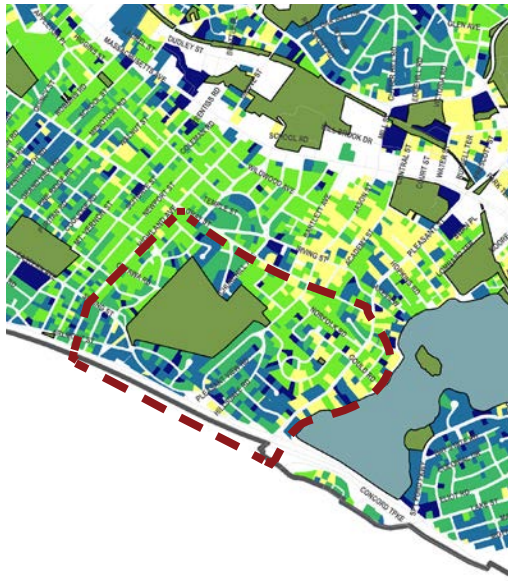
Observations from Analysis:

South of Arlington Center, Jason Heights is distinguished by its larger lot sizes and many older houses. The core of the neighborhood was a 1928 subdivision of George Hill's market garden. Many of the homes incorporate eclectic elements such as a Tudor-revival front chimney.



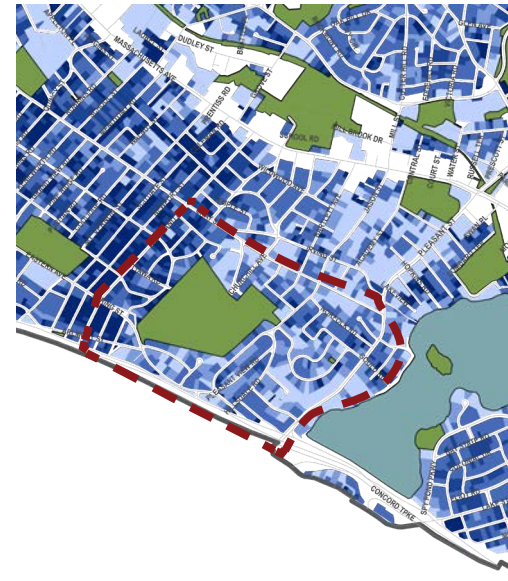
Photos taken by Wynelle E., Wendy R., Harriman Team. Some images from Google Streetview.

Jason Heights/Arlington Center



Legend
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- 1928 - 1940
- 1941 - 1970
- 1971 - 2018
- Arlington Boundary



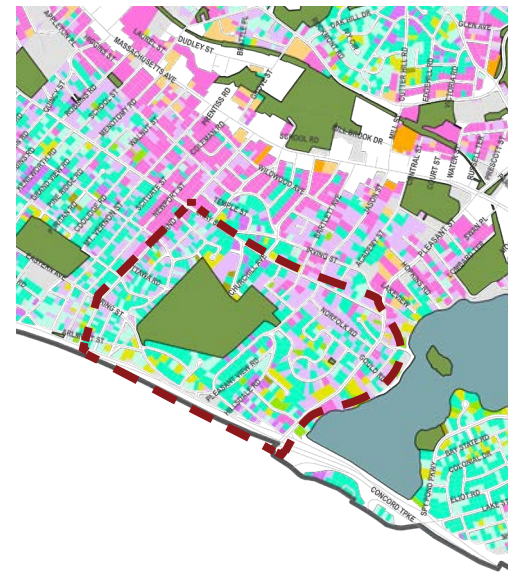
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Robbins Farm/Arlington Heights

Characteristics

Residential Zoning: R1, R2

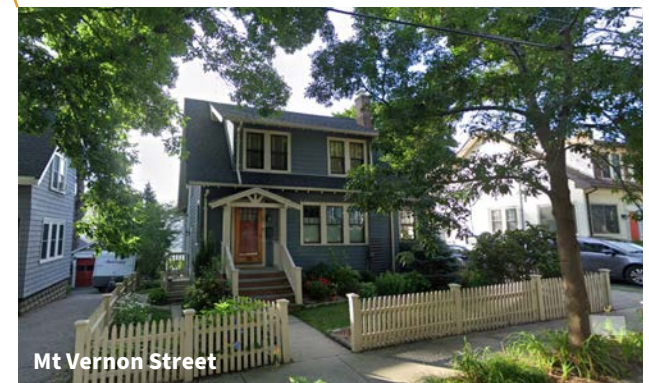
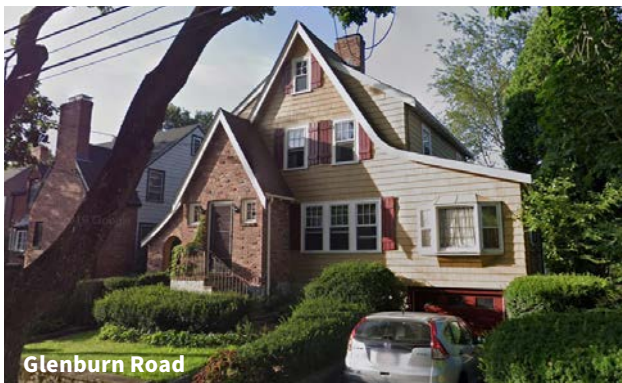
Styles: Colonial, Cape/Bungalow, Various Historic Styles, some Ranch

Lot Size: Small, Medium

Age: Mostly 1901-1940

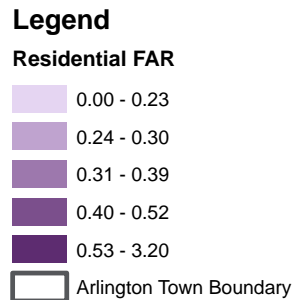
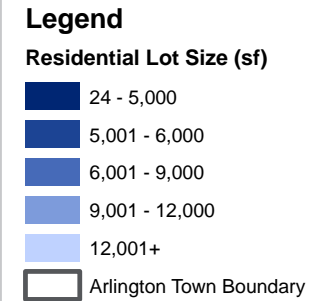
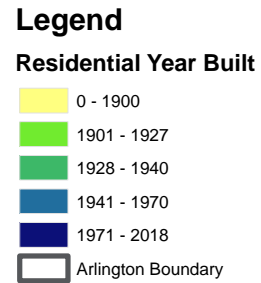
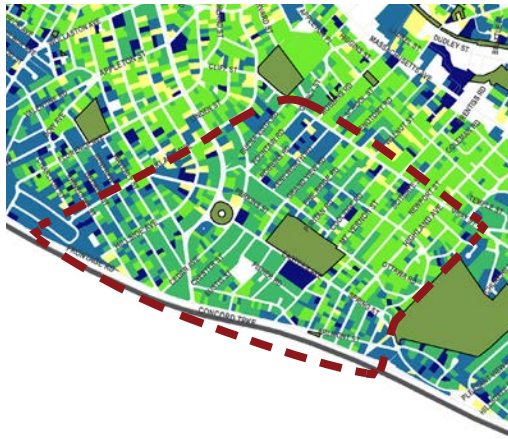
Observations from Analysis:

Robbins Farm is named after its large park at its core. It is a sub-area of Arlington Heights. The street grid runs up the hill, creating a stepped condition between houses. The houses were also generally built in the 1920s and built on smaller lots.



Photos taken by Wynelle E., Wendy R., Harriman Team. Some images from Google Streetview.

Robbins Farm/Arlington Heights



Mount Gilboa / Turkey Hill

Characteristics

Residential Zoning: R1, R2

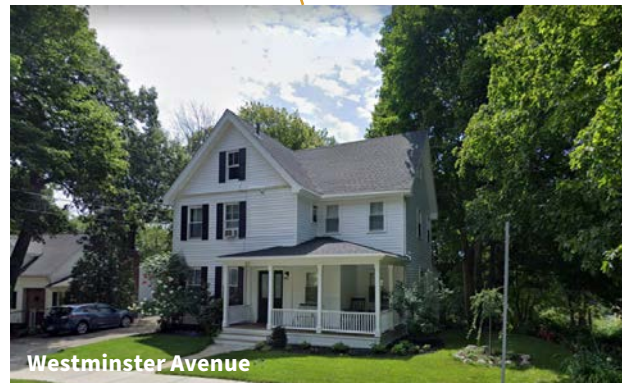
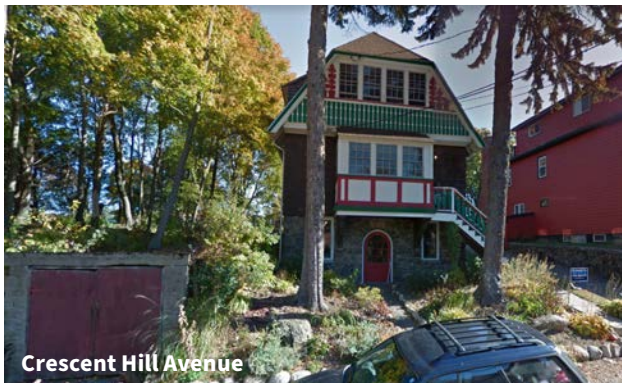
Styles: Mix of historic styles, some more recent styles

Lot Size: Small, some larger lots

Age: Mixed

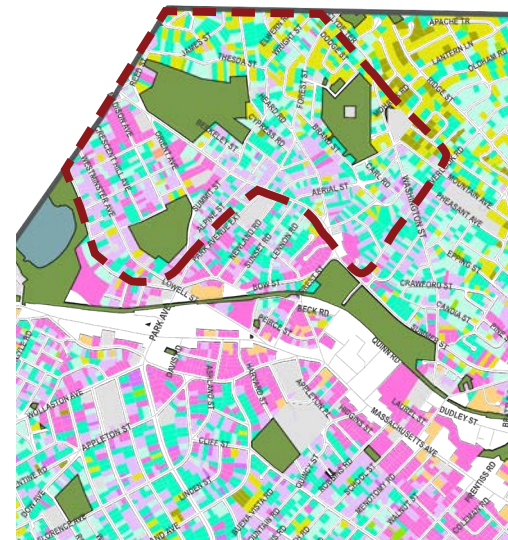
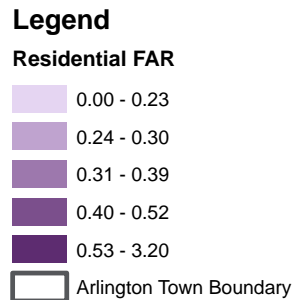
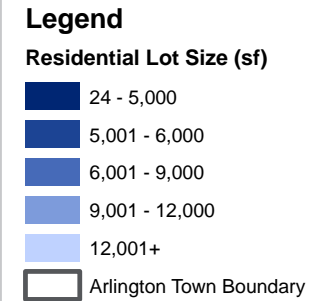
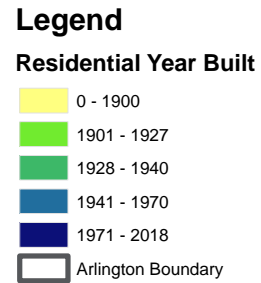
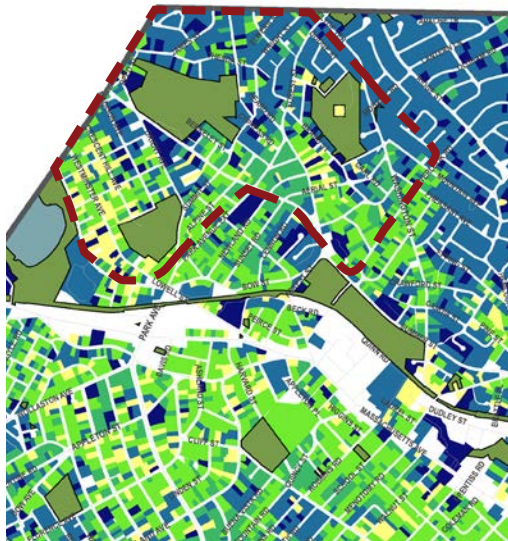
Observations from Analysis:

Mount Gilboa is characterized by its historic district and diversity of styles. Meanwhile, Turkey Hill has many mid-20th century and modern-day constructions. There are many new, larger homes being built, particularly around Turkey Hill.



Photos taken by Wynelle E., Wendy R., Harriman Team. Some images from Google Streetview.

Mount Gilboa / Turkey Hill



Morningside

Characteristics

Residential Zoning: R0, R1

Styles: Ranch, Cape, Colonial

Lot Size: Large

Age: 1950-70 with pockets of pre-war houses

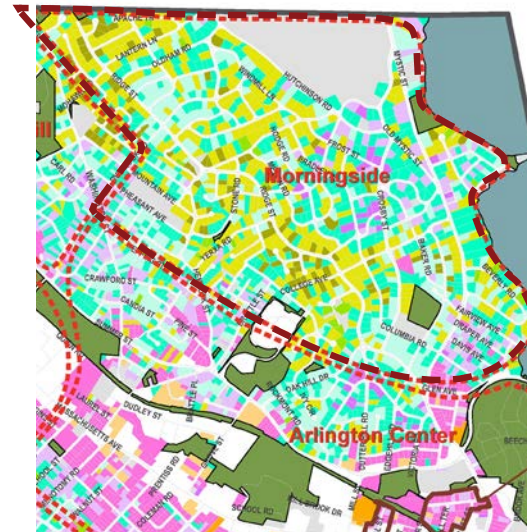
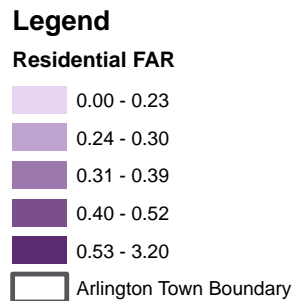
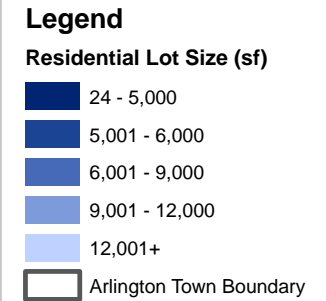
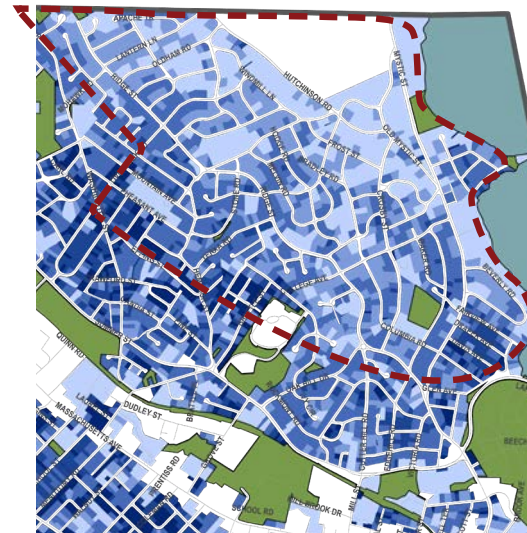
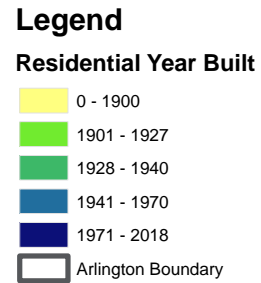
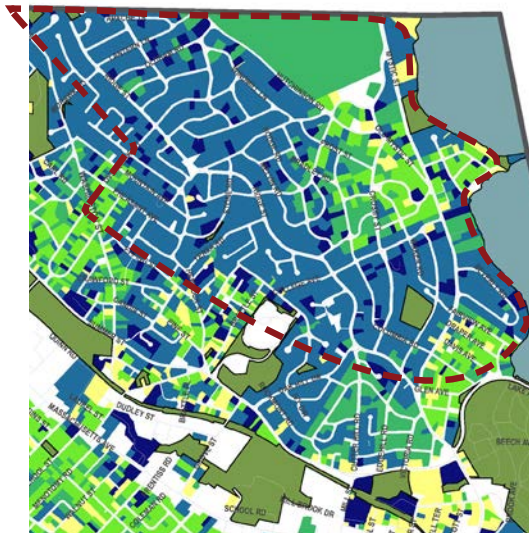
Observations from Analysis::

Morningside consists of larger lots. In the 50's and 60's, much of the area was developed with colonial revival ranch homes. In the historic pockets, there are many examples of "old style" and colonial houses. New constructions are replacing some of the ranch homes.



Photos taken by Wynelle E., Wendy R., Harriman Team. Some images from Google Streetview.

Morningside



Zoning Analysis - Uses

| | R0 | R1 | R2 | R3 | R4 | R5 | R6 | R7 |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Single-family detached dwelling | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Six or more single family dwellings on one or more contiguous lots | SP | SP | SP | SP | SP | SP | SP | SP |
| Two-family dwelling, duplex | | | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Six or more units in two-family dwellings or duplex dwelling on one or more contiguous lots | | | SP | SP | SP | SP | SP | SP |
| Three-family dwelling | | | | SP | SP | SP | SP | SP |
| Townhouse | | | | SP | SP | SP | SP | SP |
| Apartment building | | | | | | SP | SP | SP |
| Conversion to apartments, up to 18 units per acre, with no alteration to the exterior of the building | | | | | SP | SP | | |
| Single-room occupancy building | | | | SP | SP | SP | SP | SP |
| Group home | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Conversion of one- or two-family dwelling to bed and breakfast | SP | SP | SP | SP | SP | SP | SP | SP |
| Assisted living residence | | | | | | | SP | |
| Dormitory | | | SP | SP | SP | SP | SP | SP |

(empty) - Not Permitted

Y - Permitted

SP - Special Permit - Planning Board / Zoning Board of Appeal

Zoning Analysis - Dimensions

| | Minimum Lot Area (sf) | Minimum Lot Area per Unit (sf) | Minimum Lot Frontage (ft) |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| R0 | 9,000 | --- | 75 |
| R1, R2 | 6,000 | --- | 60 |
| R3 - Townhouse | --- | 2,500 | 45 |
| R3 - Other permitted residential use | 5,000 | --- | 45 |

| | Front Yard (ft) | Side Yard (ft) | Rear Yard (ft) |
|---|-----------------|---|----------------|
| R0, R1 | 25 | 10 | --- |
| Rear (lot depth 100 ft or more) | --- | --- | 20 |
| Rear (lot depth < 100 ft) | --- | --- | 20% lot depth |
| Accessory buildings and garage structures | 25 | 6 | 6 |
| R2 | 20 | 10 | --- |
| Rear (lot depth 100 ft or more) | --- | --- | 20 |
| Rear (lot depth < 100 ft) | --- | --- | 20% lot depth |
| Accessory buildings and garage structures | 25 | 6 | 6 |
| R3 | | | |
| Townhouse | 10 | 10 | 20 |
| Other permitted residential use | 10 | One side: min. 10 Sum of two sides: min. 16 | 20% lot depth |
| Accessory buildings and garage structures | 25 | 6 | 6 |

Zoning Analysis - Dimensions

| | Landscaped Open Space (Min.) | Usable Open Space (Min.) | Maximum Lot Coverage |
|--|------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| R0 - Permitted residential structure | 10% | 30% | 35% |
| R1, R2 - Permitted residential structure | 10% | 30% | 35% |
| R3 - Townhouse | 10% | 30% | --- |
| R3 - Other permitted residential use | 10% | 30% | 45 |

| | Maximum Height (ft) | Maximum height (stories) | Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) |
|--|---------------------|--------------------------|---|
| R0, R1 - 1F detached dwelling | 35 | 2 1/2 | (.35 applies only to "other permitted structure") |
| R2 - 1F detached dwelling, 2F dwelling, or duplex dwelling | 35 | 2 1/2 | (.35 applies only to "other permitted structure") |
| R0, R1, R2 | | | |
| Accessory Structures (>80 sf) and private garages | 20 | 2 | --- |
| Minor Accessory building (<=80 sf) | 7 | 1 | --- |
| R3 | | | --- |
| Principal building or structure | 35 | 3 | 0.75 |
| Detached accessory structure (> 80 sf) | 20 | 2 | --- |
| Detached accessory structure (<= 80 sf) | 7 | 1 | --- |

Zoning Analysis - Parking

- Single-, Two-, or Three-family dwelling: 1 space per dwelling unit
- Detached Garage placement:
 - Side Yard Minimum (Garage in rear yard): 6 ft.
 - Side Yard Minimum (Garage in side yard): 10 ft.
 - Rear Yard Minimum: 6 ft.
- Where Parking is allowed:
 - Side yard and rear yard on a paved driveway;
 - Attached or detached garage; or
 - Within the foundation of a dwelling.
 - Front yard parking forbidden.
- Slope:
 - Cannot exceed a 15% downward slope, unless by special permit
25' (minimum front yard setback in R1)



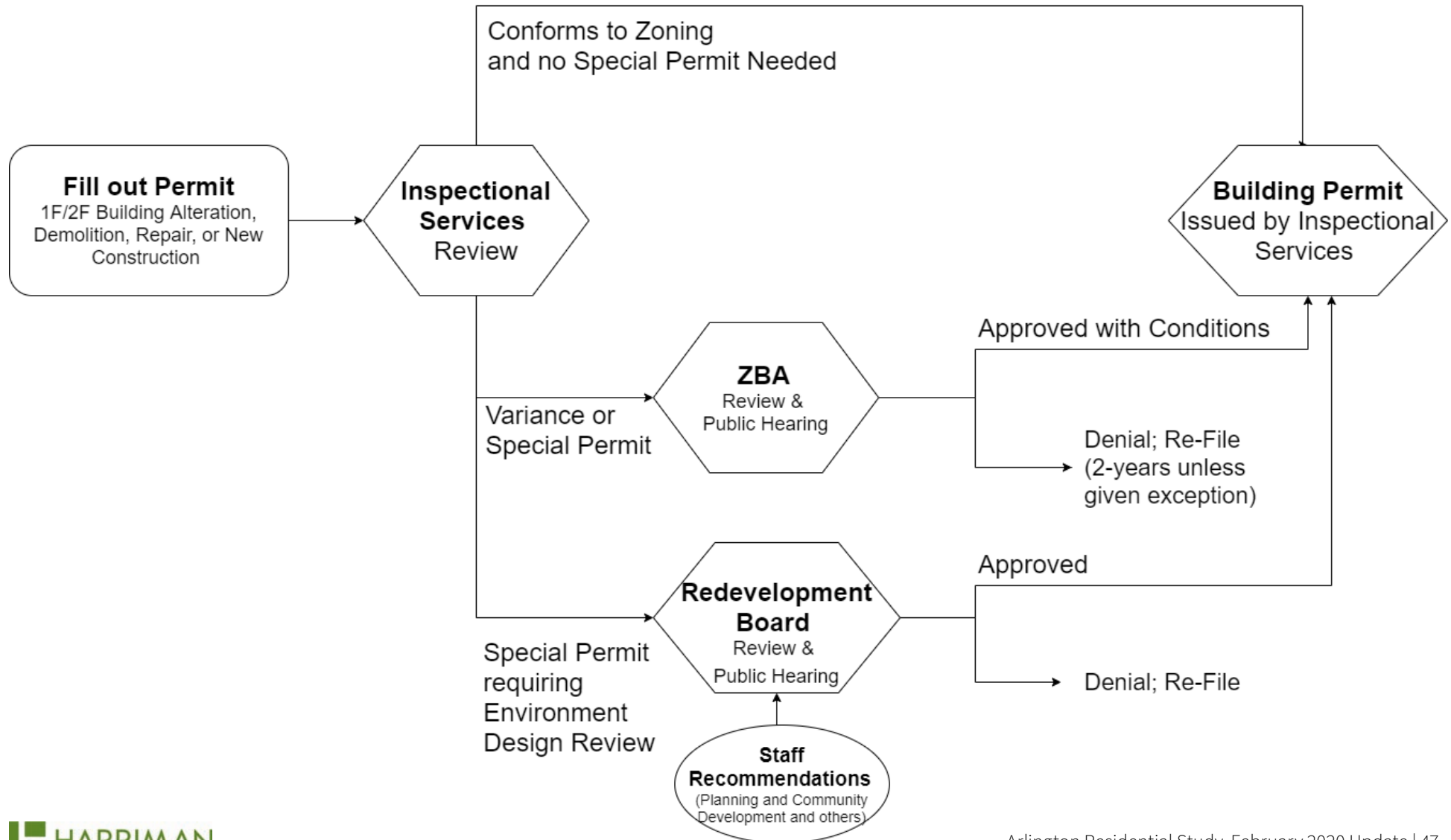
Illustrative example of a 15% downward slope.



Examples of “Park-Unders” built before the new slope regulations were put into place.

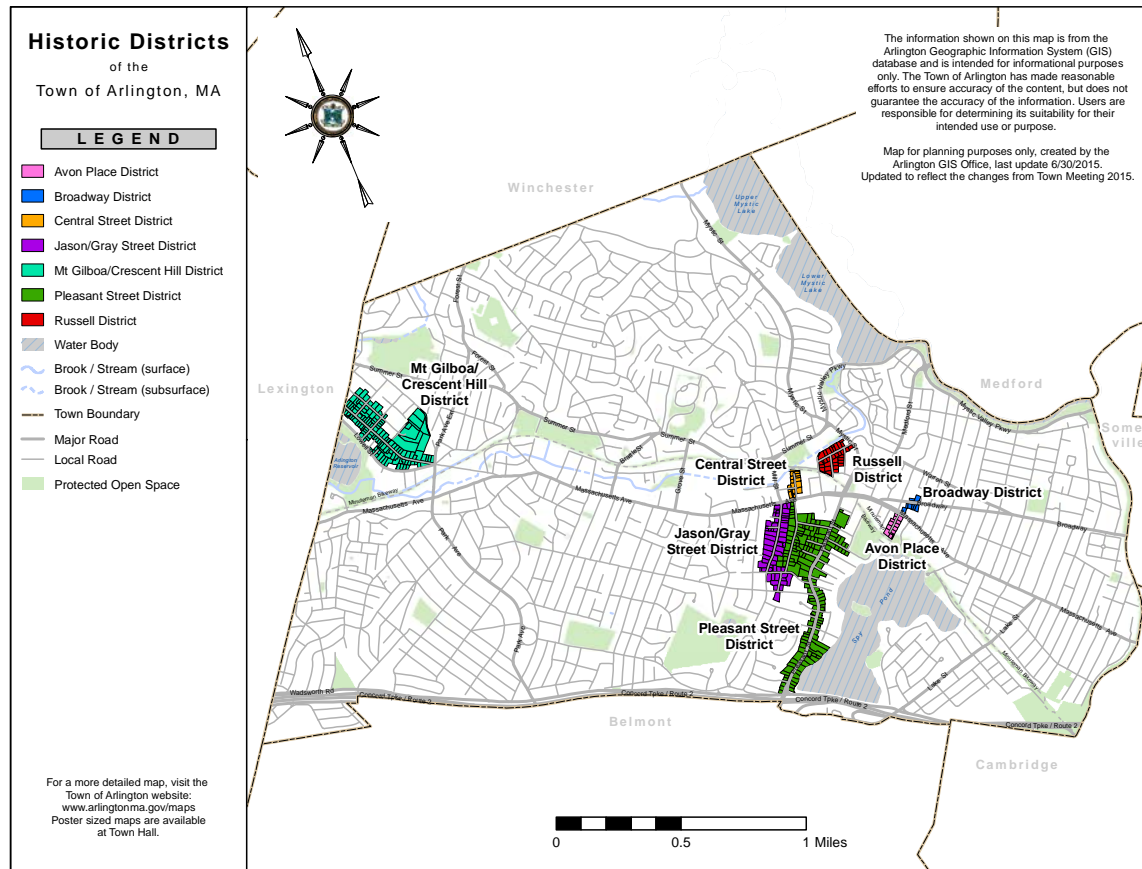
Zoning Analysis - Process

1. Where should a 'Design Review' fit into the process?
2. How should it be triggered?



Historic District Review - Process

- All alterations, demolitions, and new construction visible by the public must receive a Certificate of Appropriateness
- Parallel Process to any ZBA/Redevelopment Board process includes public notice and public hearing



Summary of Conclusions

1. Though much of the area of concern is zoned R0 and R1, the zoning does not fully capture the different identities between neighborhoods.
2. Many new constructions and additions do not fit with their context, particularly when a larger lot allows a much larger house than what was there originally.
3. The way new homes are designed reflect a change in lifestyle and tastes; for example, the attached garage reflects how important the automobile has become.
4. Small, older houses on large lots are generally most susceptible to change.

Questions for Discussion

- What are the key design issues and patterns that impact the identity of a neighborhood?
- What are the different neighborhoods? What factors differentiate them from each other?
- What is the current permitting process and where would design review be added to the existing process? How can we balance clear and understandable guidelines with flexibility?
- How can design guidelines balance the needs of homeowners to maintain and expand their homes in an economical way with the desire for updated and new houses to be consistent with their neighbors?

Next Steps

- 1. Inventory and Recommendation Memorandum based on today's Discussion - March 2020**
- 2. Next Residential Design Group Meeting - March 26, 2020**
- 3. Preparation for Neighborhood Workshop #1 - April 9, 2020**

Zoning Analysis - Special Cases & Key Definitions

- **Building Height:** The vertical distance of the highest point of the roof above the average grade of the curb line abutting the property. Refer to Sections 5.3.19, 5.3.20, and 5.4.2.B(5) for detailed exceptions.
- **Corner lots:** Use both front yard minimums (depending on adjoining lots)
- **Through Lots:** Use both front yard minimums on any side that faces street
- **Projections:** Mostly okay if not more than 25 square feet in floor area or more than one story high, can extend into minimum yard.
- **Unenclosed decks, steps** which do not project more than 10 feet into front yard, 5 feet into side yard, 10 feet into rear yard (and not closer to lot line than half the size of the required yard), are all okay.
- **Second Story additions** within required front yard may extend no more than 1 foot beyond existing building wall.
- **Average Setback Exception** - Where the required lot frontage of developed residential lots along a block amounts to more than 50% of the block frontage, and where said development has an average setback less than that required by this bylaw, then any vacant lot setback for a residential use may be reduced to said average of the existing development.
- Side yard doesn't apply to attached buildings (like duplexes if allowed).
- **Story, Half:** A story which is under a gable, hipped, gambrel roof, or other sloped roof with a minimum slope of 2:12, where less than one half the floor area measured from the underside of the roof framing to the finished floor below has a clear height of 7 feet 0 inches or more.
- **Large Additions:** No alteration or addition which increases the gross floor area of a building by 750 square feet or more, or by 50% or more of the building's gross floor area on the date of application for a permit or because of cumulative alterations or additions during the previous two years, shall be allowed unless: The addition is constructed entirely within the existing foundation, or The Board of Appeals, acting pursuant to Section 3.3, finds that the alteration or addition is in harmony with other structures and uses in the vicinity.